

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reexamination and reconsideration of this Application, withdrawal of the rejection, and formal notification of the allowability of all claims as now presented are earnestly solicited in light of the above amendments and remarks that follow.

Claims 1, 4, 5, 7-21, 23, 24, 26-28, and 31-34 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 21, and 31 are independent claims. The subject matter of original claim 6 has been incorporated into independent claim 1, thus necessitating the cancellation of claim 6. The cancellation of claim 6 also necessitated amending claim 7 to change its dependency to claim 1. The subject matter of claim 25 has been rewritten in independent form as new independent claim 31, thereby necessitating cancellation of claim 25. Claims 29 and 30 have also been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. New dependent claims 32-34 have also been added. The new dependent claims contain subject matter previously presented in other claims of record, such as claims 18, 19, 23, and 24. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter is introduced by these amendments. It is believed these amendments place the application in condition for allowance in light of the allowed subject matter noted by the Examiner in the previous office action. Accordingly, entry of these amendments is respectfully requested.

Applicants note with appreciation that the Examiner has indicated that claims 21, 23, 24, and 26 are allowed, and claims 6, 7, and 25 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, as noted above, Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to incorporate the subject matter of claim 6. Additionally, Applicants present herewith new independent claim 31, which represents the subject matter of claim 25 rewritten in independent form. These amendments are made to expedite prosecution, and not in acquiescence to any rejection of record.

Claims 1, 4, 5, 8, 16, 17, and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by the previously-cited Mentzel patent. As noted above, Applicants have now amended independent claim 1 to incorporate the subject matter of claim 6, which was not implicated by this rejection. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

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Claims 9-15, 18, 20, and 27-30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the Mentzel patent. As noted above, claims 29-30 have been cancelled herein and the remaining claims noted in this rejection have been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 6, which was not implicated by the rejection. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection as well.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,

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